

30) (withdrawn) A port extender comprising;

a housing;

a male USB connector; and

A1 a female USB connector, wherein said male USB connector and said female

USB connector are contained within said housing.

31) (withdrawn) The port extender of claim 31, wherein said housing consists of a rigid material.

In the Specification:

A2 In paragraph 43: Referring next to FIGS. 6 and 7: In this embodiment of the inventive device, a sliding internal carriage system may be utilized to physically move and extend connector 110 out from the protective cover 135. Here again, the basic action may be similar in nature to that often used with utility knives, razors, scrapers, and the like. Manual extender 114 (as shown in FIG. 6) is in the retracted position, and as it is moved forward as shown in FIG. 7, connector 110 is shifted outwards and revealed. The sliding action may optionally be initiated by first pressing a safety release button or the like. This embodiment, with its ability to retract into the housing, can offer the advantage of an overall smaller footprint when compared to prior art devices (e.g., Fig. 1, the '500 patent). This, obviously, is an extremely important feature for a pocketable device. In addition, front barrier protector 160 (e.g., door(s)) are shown in FIG. 11). Manual extender 114 may, for example, be mounted on the top or on a side of the encasement for device 105.

In paragraph 44: Referring next to FIG. 8: In this embodiment of the inventive device, USB connector 110 is shown in it's "long-throw" extended configuration. As used herein, the term long-throw means being substantially longer than specified in the existing standard for a peculiar particular connector. By way of non-limiting example, conventional USB connectors are approximately ¼" H x 1" W x 1" L, in

A2 the inventive device the length may be extended from anywhere 15% percent upwards to 200% or more, so as to give connector 110 additional "clearance" room so as to more easily fit into a recessed USB port, or to better fit amongst, multiple, close proximity, USB ports and their associated cabling.

A3 In paragraph 47: Referring now to FIG 11, device component 120 may have protective front barrier assembly 155, that when actuated, may reveal the USB connector through protective barrier 160, such as a door or a flexible diaphragm, etc. The door(s) may swing out (e.g., using hinge 170) of the path of connector 110 and may be spring loaded (e.g., using spring 165) so as to automatically close when the operation is reversed. The flexible diaphragm 160 may have a small slit 185 which would allow the USB connector to push through when manually actuated. It is important to note that the aforementioned "500 '500 patent makes no attempt to address the issue of a front protector. By way of example and not limitation, other examples of suitable covers 135 may be a hinged cover, a flip away cover, an interconnected cover system (e.g., a cable or other means integrating the device 100 and protective cover 110 together) and other similar approaches. The connector and/or plug may be designed so as to be "inter-locking" with the host port, so as to better prevent against inadvertent connection breaks. Door 160 may have to be slightly recessed into cover 135 for the automatic retraction embodiment (e.g., FIG 2). Such embodiments as described above may be incorporated into the current invention by one skilled in the art, having the benefit of the disclosure contained herein.

Remarks:

- 1) Claims 1-31 were originally filed. Claims 30-31 are withdrawn pursuant to the restriction requirement of the current office action. Claims 3,5,6,9 and 21 are currently amended herein. Claims 1-29 are pending.
- 2) In the office Action, Claims 1-29 are identified as being drawn to invention I, and claims 30-31 are identified as being drawn to invention II. Pursuant to the restriction requirement, Applicant elects